

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

THE INDUSTRIAL AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF OUR PEOPLE PARAMOUNT TO ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF STATE POLICY.

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AGRICULTURE

REPORT OF SECRETARY WILSON.

A Summary of the Important Features of the Work and Prospects of the National Department of Agriculture.

Secretary James Wilson, of the United States Department of Agriculture, has just issued his seventh annual report to the President, and a copy of the volume, a book of 106 pages, has just been put in the hands of The Progressive Farmer. We cannot even mention all the subjects discussed, but those of special interest to Southern farmers will have attention in this article.

The book opens with a discussion of the educational requirements of the research work of the Department. Although the Department has availed itself to the fullest extent of graduates of the agricultural colleges, it has been necessary, in view of the rapid development of the work, to secure competent men wherever they could be found. In the training of specialists for its various lines of work, the Department has become practically a post-graduate institution. Mr. Wilson, in illustration of this fact, reports the admission to the Department since 1897 of 496 students; 249 of these are still in the Department, not less than 132 having passed into the classified service.

PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Secretary Wilson reviews at length the production and exports of American agricultural products. The increase in the exports of farm products for the half century ended 1901 was from 147 million to 952 million dollars—550 per cent. The exports of farm products for the closing decade of the last century was over 700 million dollars, and for 1903 over 878 million dollars, an amount second only to that of 1901.

Although the consumption of cotton in this country is greater than that of any other country in the world, yet, in addition to supplying the home market, the South exported last year over three and one-half billion pounds of cotton, worth 317 million dollars.

BETTER DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRESS.

Mr. Wilson congratulates the country upon the better distribution of agricultural progress since 1890. The distribution of expansion, progress, and welfare has been more general throughout all the sections of the country, especially in the South.

TEXAS FEVER.

In the suppression of the Texas fever, 1,620,403 cattle from the infected district and 389,525 cattle from the district adjacent have been inspected and 66,116 infected cars have been cleaned and disinfected. The efforts of the Bureau of Animal Industry, which has for years been endeavoring to discover a practical method of destroying the tick by which this disease has spread without injuring the cattle, seems likely to be successful. Such a consummation would relieve most of the Southern cattle from quarantine restrictions and would add greatly to their value in the markets of the country. Apparent success has been reached by dipping cattle in a crude oil obtained in certain Texas wells.

NEW LONG STAPLE UPLAND COTTONS.

Satisfactory results are recorded with the hybrid or long-staple Upland cottons and extensive field tests are now under way, and if the result of the present season's work is satisfactory, seed will be grown for distribution. Indications at the present stage of experiments also favor the belief that we shall soon have varieties of Egyptian cotton adapted to cultivation in this country. At present we pay Egyptian growers seven and one-half million dollars annually for their cottons.

The wilt-resistant Sea Island varieties of cotton distributed by the Department last year and this year have been proved very satisfactory. Progress has also been made in securing varieties resistant to Texas root rot and other pests.

SUMATRA TOBACCO IN CONNECTICUT

Some supervisory work on tobacco was done in Connecticut the past year, but the principal purpose of the Department to show the feasibility of growing a wrapper leaf of superior quality in the Connecticut valley has been successful, and it remains for the growers to put the shade-grown Sumatra on a substantial basis.

CUBAN CIGAR LEAF TOBACCO IN THE SOUTH.

In Ohio the quantity of tobacco handled in accordance with the methods prescribed by the Bureau of Soils has increased from 655,000 pounds of the 1901 crop to over four million pounds of the crop of 1902. Important work has been done in the experimental growing of Cuban cigar leaf tobacco on the Orangeburg sandy loam and the Orangeburg loam in South Carolina, Alabama and

Texas. These soils appear very similar to the tobacco soils of Cuba, and the aroma of the leaf grown on one of them in Texas has been pronounced very fine by the trade.

DOMESTIC AND IMPORTED FILLER TOBACCO

The total production of domestic filler tobacco in 1901 was seventy-one million pounds, worth nearly eight million dollars. In the same year the Cuban tobacco imported amounted to eighteen and one-half million pounds, but the value aggregated over sixteen million dollars. Thus the Cuban imports, though nearly one-fourth in quantity, amounted to two and one-third times the value of the domestic.

THE COTTON BOLL-WEEVIL

The work of the Division of Entomology combating the cotton boll weevil was continued with energy, the increased funds at its disposal making it possible for the first time to conduct experiments with cultural methods of controlling the pest on a large scale. Extensive experiments were conducted in the Brazos Valley, the most seriously infested portion of the territory, and at Victoria, in the extreme southern portion of the State.

A section of the division was organized to work in co-operation with the Bureau of Forestry for the investigation of insects injurious to forests. It was found that the destruction of many large areas of timber, due to forest fires, was primarily the work of insects which had collected in the timber, thus offering favorable conditions, for the starting of extensive fires. An intelligent application of the remedies devised by the Division of Entomology for combating the codling moth, showed that 85 to 98 per cent of fruit might be saved.

SILK CULTURE.

Considerable space is devoted to the discussion of the silk culture experiments, for which a special appropriation of ten thousand dollars was made by Congress. Expert workers from France were secured, who are now operating the reels in the Department of Agriculture, and the raisers of cocoons were informed that their product would be purchased by the Department at current European market rates.

SPREAD OF COTTON BOLL WEEVIL

The invasion of the cotton boll weevil has been a special menace to the cotton crop and has awakened widespread apprehension as to the

future of this crop. In addition to the excellent work of the Division of Entomology in combating this pest, the Bureau of Plant Industry has during the past year done considerable work with a view to securing, if possible, early and resistant varieties by breeding and selection. Notwithstanding all that has been accomplished, however, the boll-weevil is constantly spreading north and east, and it seems but a question of time when it will reach all the cotton-growing States. The country is thus confronted with a very great problem, as the invasion of this insect necessarily means a complete revolution in present methods. The Secretary reports that after a personal visit to the South and a thorough canvass of the situation with representative men in Congress and with others, he is of opinion that a cotton-investigation fund should be appropriated for immediate use in connection with this problem. He believes that not less than \$500,000 should be appropriated and made immediately available to make this work comprehensive and thoroughly effective, and he enumerates in detail ten problems to the solution of which these funds should be devoted. Should this recommendation be carried out, his plan of work would be to utilize and combine the efforts of the Bureau of Plant Industry and the Division of Entomology, for which he recommends reorganization as a Bureau, with the addition of the advice and co-operation of one or two thoroughly practical men in the two States most interested, namely, Louisiana and Texas. The Secretary of Agriculture, he adds, should have full authority to organize the work for the sole object of securing the most immediate practical results.

Save All the Cotton this Year.

"It will be well to save all the yellow cotton from the patch this year," remarked a citizen the other day. "Yes," said a farmer, "it will pay to save it all even if you have to crack the bolls like scaley barks and pick the cotton. Better invite the boys and girls in and have a sociable and cotton-picking in the house." A combination like that might be captivating enough to successfully mix a little profitable work with pleasure. We are confident such a scheme would work out all right provided a few scaley barks were mixed along with the cotton to be cracked.—Marshville Home.